

# CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

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*American College of Cardiology*

The Honorable William H. Frist, M.D.  
 Majority Leader  
 S-230, United States Capitol  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
 Minority Leader  
 S-221, United States Capitol  
 Washington, DC 20510

July 21, 2005

Dear Senators Frist and Reid:

As Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, and out of concern for the millions of patients suffering from devastating illness and injury whom we serve, we are strongly opposed to the passage of Senate Bill 658.

In November of last year, California voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 71, which created the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the most ambitious state-led funding program to support stem cell research in our country. Proposition 71, which focuses on funding the very best science to cure disease, prohibits funding for human reproductive cloning through an amendment to the California State Constitution. However, the capacity to fund research involving disease-specific stem cell lines, governed by tight regulatory controls, is critical to the mission of Proposition 71. In criminalizing this important breakthrough scientific technology, SB 658 would severely undermine our ability—and the will of California voters—to advance stem cell science and medicine.

As you know, in May, a team of Korean researchers announced a very important development in the derivation of disease-specific stem cell lines. Such fundamental findings enabled by somatic cell nuclear transfer technologies may allow us to create new, healthy tissues to replace damaged or dead tissue: for example, bone marrow for the treatment of cancer and other hematopoietic diseases such as sickle cell anemia and thalassemia; pancreatic cells for alleviating diabetes, and neuronal cells for treating Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's and various forms of brain and spinal cord disorders. In California, we are poised to build upon the

findings of our scientific colleagues abroad, and we are committed to upholding the very highest standards in implementing and overseeing this research.

Two months ago, for example, we adopted the landmark guidelines produced by the National Academies of Science (NAS) as the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine's interim standards. We are now working with a subcommittee of our board and some of the finest medical ethicists and scientists in the country to further refine and strengthen these standards. Before a dollar is spent on research, we will have in place a code of standards and ethical regulations that will serve as a model for the rest of the world.

While we believe it is essential that a ban on cloning for reproductive purposes that does not hinder vital medical research be enacted at the federal level, SB 658's proposed prohibition on funding research involving disease-specific stem cell lines would radically impair our own ethical pursuit of treatments and cures. The technology has launched; our standards will lead the world; and our own scientists are now ready to contribute to the growing list of scientific breakthroughs in stem cell science. Any further delay or roadblock in our ability to move forward would constitute its own ethical transgression.

Sincerely,

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Robert Klein, Esq.  
Chairman, ICOC  
President, Klein Financial Corporation

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Edward E. Penhoet, PhD  
Vice-Chairman, ICOC  
President  
Gordon and Betty  
Moore Foundation  
Dean Emeritus, University of  
California, Berkeley  
School of Public Health

Cc Senator Dianne Feinstein